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Committed to enhancing the professionalism of athletic field managers by improving the safety, playability and appearance of athletic fields at all levels through seminars, field days, publications and networking with those in the sports turf industry.

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This newsletter is the official bi-monthly publication of the Sports Field Managers Association of New Jersey.

For information regarding this newsletter, contact:
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Editor: Brad Park, Rutgers University
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SFMANJ does not necessarily support the opinions of those reflected in the following articles.

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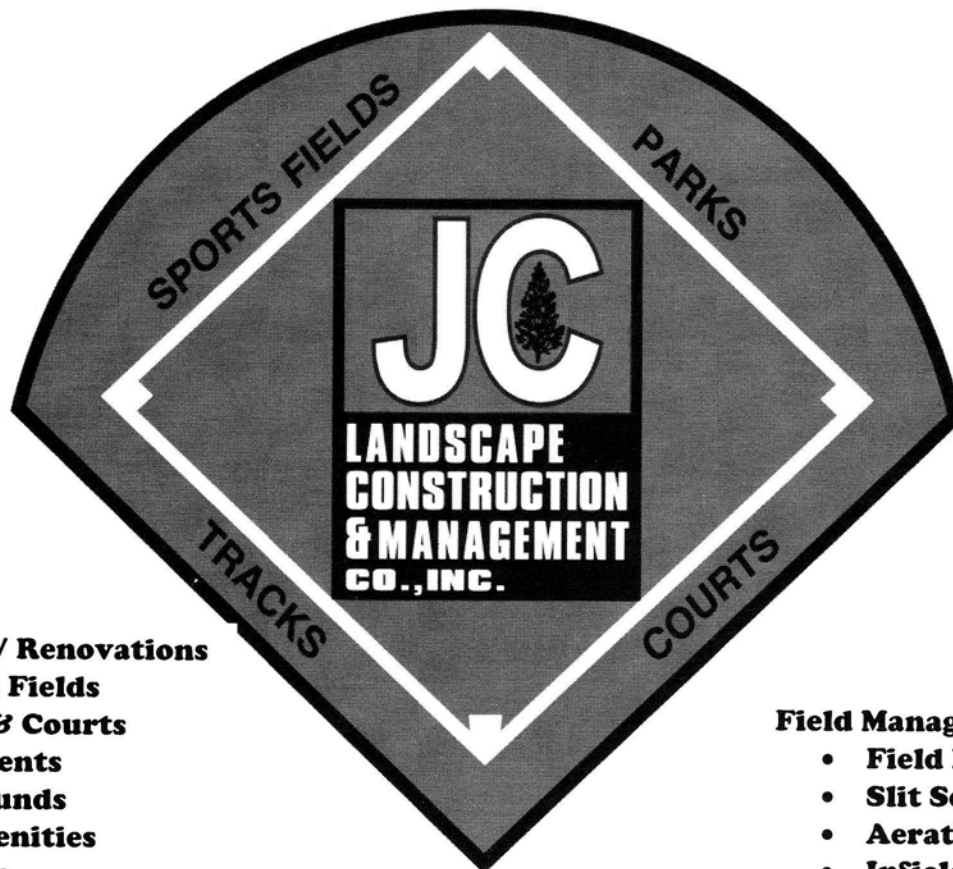
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STMA 2008: AN SFMANJ MEMBER REPORTS ON HIS EXPERIENCE

By Kevin Shipman

I have just returned to the cold northeast from sunny and mild Phoenix, Arizona (I personally like the cold as a nice break from the hot humid weather in the summer). I was attending the Sports Turf Managers Association (STMA) Annual Conference and Trade Show. This annual conference is the highlight of the Association's year and recognizes its accomplishments as well as the accomplishments of its membership in the previous year. The annual business meeting is held over a lunch and introduces us (the membership) to the Association's new Officers and the new business that STMA is looking to handle in the upcoming year. They provide a financial report on the organization so we can stay abreast of how our membership dues are being spent and how we are aided by being members.

During the STMA conference, there are a multitude of speakers and educational sessions you may attend. The topics range from how to prepare a budget, to managing turf with multiple events, to weed control, to synthetic turf. There are also two days of a trade show that allows the equipment side of the industry to show-off their latest tractors, mowers, seeders, aerators, irrigation, and other supplies. On Friday night, the annual awards banquet lets us see the work of some of the best sports turf managers in the previous year. STMA hands-out awards for the best fields in the high school, college, and professional

levels. They also honor some of the best sports turf managers in the industry with awards named in honor of legendary sports turf managers.

I work at Kingsway High School in Southern New Jersey. It is a Grade 7 through 12 school with about 55 acres of sports fields and 15 acres of common areas around the schools. I have worked in a school setting for the past 7 years and find it very rewarding to do a good job and see that your efforts are noticed. In the school setting everything you perform outside is noticed. If the grass dies, the school administrators and coaches come to see why. If the grass is green, growing well, and the fields are kept-up, the coaches always seem to enjoy the games a little more. The administrators take notice of how the school grounds look and take pride in knowing their school looks good to the tax-paying public. I am even told by non-coaching teachers that the school grounds look nice; that makes me proud of the work that my staff and myself do.

The conference is always educationally rewarding as there are many sessions that are available. This year I focused on attending a few sessions that could provide me with knowledge in areas where I

(continued on page 11)



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**Dr. Henry W. Indyk
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As many of you know, the turfgrass industry lost a dear friend and colleague in September 2005. We will all miss Henry very much and would like to insure that his legacy lives on. The Indyk family would like to establish a memorial fellowship to support graduate students interested in applied turfgrass science. This fellowship is being created to help assure that tomorrow's graduate students have the financial resources to get an advanced degree in turfgrass science at Rutgers University. To fund a full graduate assistantship each year in Henry's name, we will need to raise a total of \$400,000. Your generous support at this time will bring us closer to reaching this goal.

To make a tax-deductible contribution today, please send a check payable to the Rutgers University Foundation, 7 College Avenue, New Brunswick, NJ 08901. Be sure to indicate "Indyk Fellowship, Turfgrass" in the memo portion of your check. If you desire, you may provide a donation in the form of a pledge payable over several years.

For information on other ways to support this fellowship, please contact Dr. Bruce B. Clarke, Director - Rutgers Center for Turfgrass Science (732-932-9400, ext. 331; or clarke@aesop.rutgers.edu) or John Pearson, Director of Leadership Gifts at the Foundation, by calling (732) 932-7899 or email: pearson@winants.rutgers.edu

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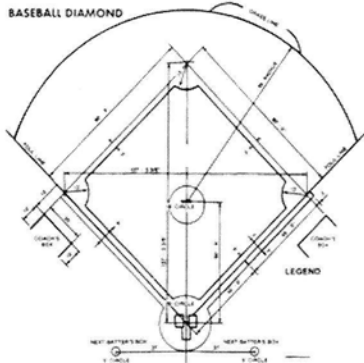
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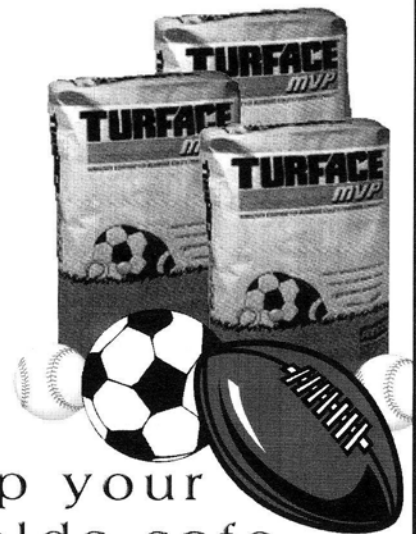
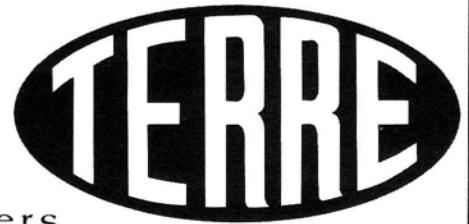
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ORGANIC TURFGRASS MANAGEMENT

By Dr. James Murphy

QUESTION FROM A CONTRACT TURF/LANDSCAPE MANAGER:

A municipality has put out a request for proposal (RFP) to have the municipally owned properties (parks and recreational turf fields) managed 'organically'. There is a bid meeting scheduled for interested bidders. What information would be helpful to know regarding the feasibility and kind of questions to ask the municipality at the bid meeting?

ANSWER:

First and foremost, you need to ask the municipal officials whether the intention of the RFP is integrated crop/pest management (ICM or IPM) that minimizes the use of pesticides or a true 'organic' management philosophy that eliminates use of all synthetic pesticides and fertilizers. Some incorrectly believe that IPM and 'organic' management are the same. Certainly the environmental goal of reducing or eliminating pesticides is commendable; however, it is important to notify everyone involved that the elimination of all synthetic pesticides has consequences that will be considered undesirable by some.

Applying a true organic philosophy to sports field management will NOT be prudent IF the municipality also expects turf/playing conditions to be identical to or better than can be achieved with synthetic pesticides and fertilizers. At this point in time, there simply are NOT enough viable organic pesticides/alternatives available to manage all of the potential pest issues on sports turf fields (which also have to persist under the wear-n-tear of extensive play/sports). Therefore, severe pest and mechanical (traffic) damage on organically managed sports turf will be a matter of WHEN not IF. Considerable hard work and creativity by the grounds staff and an understanding by all users (players, coaches and parents) is essential before an organic approach on sports turf will be viewed as successful within the municipality.

Weeds will probably be the first major issue faced in a true organic management program. Currently, the efficacy and very limited number of organic herbicides available make it virtually impossible to keep out invasive annual and perennial weeds on sports turf (researchers continue looking for more effective organic alternatives but this is a slow process). Annual weeds are particularly problematic as these weeds die each year (hence the name annual) and expose bare soil to the erosive forces of wind and water and the compactive forces of athletic and maintenance equipment traffic, which further degrades soil conditions and the ability to grow healthy turf.

The municipality must recognize that routine renovation (probably one or more per year) will be required for any chance of moderate success of sports turf under 'organic' management. Renovation that involves extensive overseeding (or sodding) in combination with the best implementation of aeration, fertilization, irrigation and mowing practices will be critical for organically managed sports turfs. Moreover, the exact timing and resources needed for renovation work are very difficult to predict since the severity of pest and environmental stress damage varies in both time and space across a facility (property). Thus, the municipality must be prepared to provide or pay for these services in

a timely and on an "as needed" basis. Also it is important that the municipality realize that there is no guarantee that an organic management philosophy will be viewed as successful by all users of the fields.

The organic philosophy for managing crops and livestock has grown in popularity and subsequently become big business in the United States. Interested persons are now seeking to transfer this organic philosophy into areas such as sports turf management. Unfortunately, one major deterrent to developing effective organic practices on sports turf is that there isn't a good analog in nature to use as model. Organic crop and livestock management systems are often based on an evaluation of how these organisms grow and survive in a diverse and naturalized ecosystem to design better management strategies. Finding an appropriate natural analog for sports turfs is very difficult. Sports turfs typically are grown on poorly constructed and highly degraded soils and are often expect to grow under intense traffic (trampling) throughout the year; conditions that are not mimicked in nature. Moreover, there are very few grass species that can be effectively used for sports turfs. More research is needed in the area of 'organic' turf management before sound recommendations can be provided that satisfy all citizens, administrators and users of these fields.

Dr. James Murphy is Extension Specialist in Turfgrass Management, Rutgers University; and SFMANJ Advisor

SFMANJ Returns to Shore Regional and Monmouth Park on May 7, 2008

(continued from page 1)

In preparation for the Breeders' Cup event, the turf course was reconstructed in 2005-06 utilizing the expertise of a Rutgers-assembled team consisting of a thoroughbred turf track specialist, irrigation specialists, civil engineers, and agronomists.

In April 2006, attendees at Spring Field Day observed the final rolls of sod installed at Monmouth Park in preparation for the 2006 racing season and ultimately the Breeders' Cup. Spring Field Day 2008 will give attendees the opportunity to see the high quality condition of the turf course two years after reconstruction and learn how the track is being prepared for the upcoming 2008 racing season.

Watch for an upcoming SFMANJ mailing to register for this event.

Brad Park is Sports Turf Res. and Ed. Coor., Rutgers Univ.; SFMANJ Board member; and Editor, SFMANJ Update

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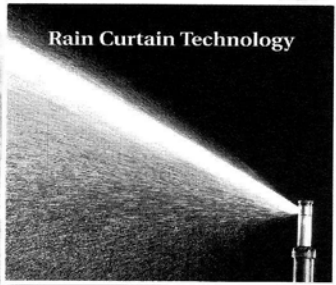
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